

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. DEGETTE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TAX CUT UNFAIR TO HISPANIC POPULATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, last week, the President signed into law one of the largest tax breaks ever for the wealthiest Americans. He did so at a time when unemployment is on the rise. Since President Bush took office, approximately 2 million jobs have been lost, and the Hispanic community has been hit the hardest with a rising unemployment rate of 7.5 percent compared to 6 percent for the general population.

People want to work, but the jobs are simply not there. Instead of pursuing policies to stimulate the economy and create jobs, the administration and the congressional majority have pushed through a plan that includes a tax cut that does nothing to address any of these financial problems and worries that are facing millions in this country.

While making false promises to create jobs and stimulate our economy, these tax cuts are targeted primarily at large corporations and the wealthiest of Americans. Those that are earning \$1 million a year will see a tax cut of over \$100,000. Half of all Latinos in this country report having an annual household income of under \$30,000. Under the Bush tax plan, some of these wealthy individuals will see a tax break that equals three times what these families make a year.

We understand that people who pay taxes deserve a break, but we have gone from record surpluses to skyrocketing deficits. We cannot meet our obligations to support critical health and education programs. And a tax cut this size does not make any sense whatsoever. We have chosen also not to pay for the war. We have chosen to put it on the backs of not only those that are our young people out there defending our country but on the backs of our children.

We now also find that in addition to favoring the wealthiest of this country, the administration's tax plan excludes those who need the assistance the

most, low- and moderate-income families. Families making between \$10,500 and \$26,625 a year are now, under law, excluded from collecting the \$400 child tax credit. Those who could benefit the most from the tax credit will in fact get nothing.

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Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty comprehending the philosophy that brought this about, trying to exclude the ones at the bottom of the totem pole. While others enjoy a tax cut, these individuals who make under \$26,625 will not. The median income in my district is \$22,000 so more than half of my constituency will not see a cent. For Hispanic families, this means that roughly 1.6 million, or 30 percent, of all Latino families who otherwise would have been eligible for the tax break are now no longer going to qualify. The child tax credit has long been crucial for Hispanic families, working families, who are deeply affected by the tax burden.

While 85 percent of Latino males are in the workforce, the largest percentage for any ethnic group in the country, many Hispanics work in seasonal, low-wage jobs, and the majority of Hispanics do not participate in the employer-sponsored retirement plans, nor do they own stock. How can the administration argue that this plan helps working men and women when working families are the ones that are left out?

The Latino community may not be one of great wealth, but we are the future of the economy and the workforce, and the Latino community deserves the respect of our leaders and deserves a fair share of any proposed tax relief plan, not just the crumbs left over from the Nation's wealthiest few. What we can do is, we will fight to fix the wrongs of this tax bill not only for Hispanic families, but for all Americans.

I am pleased to be here tonight on behalf of the Hispanic Congressional Caucus, and I am pleased to have members of the Congressional Black Caucus with me.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and I thank the gentleman and the Congressional Black Caucus for also participating tonight and discussing some issues that confront our community.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman not only for being here tonight, but also for the tremendous leadership you provide as chairman of the Hispanic Congressional Caucus. I have been pleased and delighted to note many evenings when I have seen you talking about not only health care, but talking about education, talking about the needs of people across the board; and I have been gratified that all evening we have seen an array of individual Democrats take to the floor, and talk about this tremendous tax break that we saw just before we left to go on vacation, go to our districts over the Memorial Day holiday.

It is amazing to me that we have heard about Leave No Child Behind when we have left millions of children, just with this one act, this one tax break for the wealthiest 1 percent, the wealthiest 5 percent, we have left millions of children behind, all at one time.

It is amazing also to hear people who do not want to pay taxes. I do not know how in the world we expect to have the kind of country, to have the kind of democracy to provide the kind of services without individuals paying taxes. Oliver Wendell Holmes supposedly said one time that taxation is the price that we pay for a civilized society. And then to hear people talk about those who do not pay much do not need breaks, or to hear colleagues suggest that because individuals are not in a position to pay much in the way of taxes, or as much as some others, that they do not deserve.

We hear talk about stimulating the economy. Whoever heard of stimulating an economy by giving back to the wealthiest individuals, who could not possibly have a need to spend any more money.

When I was a kid growing up, my mother used to make soup, and if she wanted to stimulate that soup, she would take her spoon and go down to the bottom of it and stir things up. When she would stir things up, the flavor would ignite and the aroma would penetrate the whole house.

So it would seem to me if we really want to shake up the economy, we would go down to the bottom, provide something for those people, raise the minimum wage, put some money in the pockets of individuals who are trying to make it. If we do that, then it is clear to me that those individuals are going to take the additional money that they have and go to the supermarket and buy milk for their children, or you are going to find people purchasing Pampers for the babies, or they are going to run to the barber shop and get a haircut or go to the beauty shop and get their hair fixed. Those individuals are going to put money back into the economy. If we have money in the economy, it means that money is going to go from one place to the next place to the next place.

I have always been told that money in neighborhoods is pretty much like blood to the body. If all the blood runs out of the body, you are going to die. Or if too much of it is in one part of the body, you are going to get sick because it is not circulating properly. So if too much of the money goes to one segment of the population, then of course the economy is going to get sick. If we have a sick economy, as we do right now, somebody is going to suffer. It really means that all of us will suffer because we have an imbalance.

But if we have things moving around, if those at the bottom are running out to the store to make their purchases, then the guy at the supermarket gets